

Message Text

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73

ACTION EA-10

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R 190145Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

SECSTATE WASHDC 4692

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOFORN CANBERRA 8171

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VS

SUBJECT: COUNTERING "PRG" EFFORTS TO SEEK BILATERAL RECOGNITION

REF: A) SAIGON 15564; B) CANBERRA A-230, DECEMBER 10, 1974

SUMMARY:

1. TEXT OF RELATIVELY BRIEF ARTICLE MENTIONED IN REF A APPEARS BELOW. ARTICLE ATTRACTED ONLY MODEST ATTENTION. INDIVIDUALS QUOTED IN IT ARE ALLAN ASHBOLT, RADICAL RADIO PRODUCER, AND PROF. CAREY, HEAD OF OBSTETRICS & GYNAECOLOGY AT UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES IN SYDNEY. NEITHER IS PARTICULARLY INFLUENTIAL, AND THEIR VIEWS SHOULD BE REGARDED AS A FURTHER EXPRESSION OF A COMPARATIVELY EXTREMIST POLITICAL VIEW IN AUSTRALIA, WORTH WATCHING, BUT NOT MUCH MORE. ACTION REQUESTED THAT EMBASSY SAIGON SEEK PERMISSION FOR US TO PASS BUU LETTER TO HAWKE OR SIMILAR COMMENT TO VIETNAMESE EMBASSY CANBERRA. END SUMMARY

2. EMBASSY APPRECIATES RECEIVING TEXT OF LETTER FROM TRAN QUOC BUU TO ACTU PRESIDENT HAWKE (REF A), COMMENTING ON ARTICLE IN SYDNEY MORNING HERALS NOV 25. SUGGEST EMBASSY SAIGON SEEK PERMISSION FROM BUU FOR US TO PASS TEXT OF LETTER, OR SIMILAR COMMENT FROM BUU TO VIETNAMESE EMBASSY CANBERRA, WHICH CAN USE IT IN ITS PUBLIC CORESPONDENCE AND INFORMATION PROGRAM. BUU'S COMMENTS COULD ALSO BE PASSED TO

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VIETNAMESE EMBASSY THROUGH MFA IN SAIGON AND MIGHT MORE

SUITABLE COME THIS WAY.

3. ARTICLE TO WHICH BUU ADDRESSED HIMSELF DID NOT ATTRACT MUCH ATTENTION, BEING CARRIED ON PAGE 8. TEXT OF ARTICLE FOLLOWS:

4. QUOTE.

AUSTRALIA SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM, THE AUTHOR AND JOURNALIST MR. ALLAN ASHBOLT SAID YESTERDAY.

MR. ASHBOLT WAS SPEAKING AT THE CENTRAL METHODIST MISSION IN SUPPORT OF A PETITION CALLING ON THE AUSTRALIA AND UNITED STATES GOVERNMENTS TO WITHDRAW ECONOMIC SUPPORT FROM THE THIEU GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM UNLESS TORTURE AND OTHER ABUSES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE DISCONTINUED.

"DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION OF THE PRG BY COUNTRIES LIKE AUSTRALIA IS A VITAL STEP TOWARDS HELPING TO RESTORE PEACE IN INDO-CHINA," HE SAID.

THE PRG CONTROLLED TWO-THIRDS OF THE AREA AND HALF THE POPULATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM.

EARLIER, PROFESSOR ALEX CAREY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NSW SAID THERE WERE AT LEAST 100,000 AND POSSIBLY 200,000 POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

MANY OF THESE, HE SAID WERE KEPT IN "TIGER CAGES" SIMILAR TO THOSE ON THE NOTORIOUS CON SON ISLAND.

THE AIM OF THE PETITION WAS TO REMIND AUSTRALIANS OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN VIETNAM. END QTE.

5. COMMENT: ALLAN ASHBOLT IS EXTREME LEFTIST PRODUCER FOR AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMMISSION, AND ORIGINATED FIVE-DAY PER WEEK, 45-MINUTE EVENING RADIO PROGRAM DURING PRIME TIME CALLED "LATELINE", WHICH HAS FEATURED CONFIDENTIAL

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STRONGLY ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA FOR PAST YEAR, WITH PROMINENT ATTENTION GIVEN TO MISCELLANEOUS AMERICAN RADICALS AND ANARCHISTS SPEAKING ON RANGE OF ISSUES. IT IS PROBABLY CORRECT TO SAY THAT ASHBOLT HAS GIVEN THE AMERICAN LUNATIC FRINGE MORE AIR TIME IN PAST YEAR THAN THEY HAVE HAD IN U.S. ITSELF FOR MANY YEARS. ASHBOLT HAS SAID PUBLICLY THAT HE HOPES THEREBY TO CONVINCE AUSTRALIAN AUDIENCES THAT IT IS APPROPRIATE TO HEAR OUT AUSTRALIAN RADICALS

CALS OF THE SAME EXTREME POLITICAL HUES AS THE LARGELY AMERICAN COMMENTATORS HEARD TO DATE. HE HAS NOT SOUGHT TO "BALANCE" PROGRAM, SAYING THAT "BALANCE" IS THE FARTHEST THING FROM HIS MIND. PROFESSOR H. M. CAREY IS PROFESSOR OF OBSTETRICS AND BYNAECOLOGY AND HEAD OF THE SCHOOL OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES IN SYDNEY. HIS REMARKS CLEARLY REFLECT THE PROPAGANDA OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ON POLITICAL DETAINEES IN SOUTH VIET-NAM, WITH WHICH EMBASSY SAIGON IS, OF COURSE, QUITE FAMILIAR. CAREY WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE ABOUT THE SAME KIND OF CREDENTIALS THAT DR. SPOCK HAD IN THE U.S. WHEN HE BEGAN TO SPEAK OUT PUBLICLY ON VIET-NAM.

6. ISSUE OF PRG RECOGNITION BY GOA HAS ATTRACTED LITTLE PUBLIC ATTENTION IN AUSTRALIA SINCE SUBMISSION OF REF B. ARTICLE ABOVE IS SIMPLY ANOTHER SHOT IN THE CONTINUING EFFORT BY A RELATIVELY SMALL GROUP OF AUSTRALIAN PUBLICISTS AND ACADEMICS TO "RADICALIZE" AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL LIFE AND FOREIGN POLICY. THERE ARE FORMIDABLE OBSTACLES IN THEIR WAY, BUT THEIR EFFORTS DESERVE THE CONTINUING ATTENTION WE WILL GIVE THEM.

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